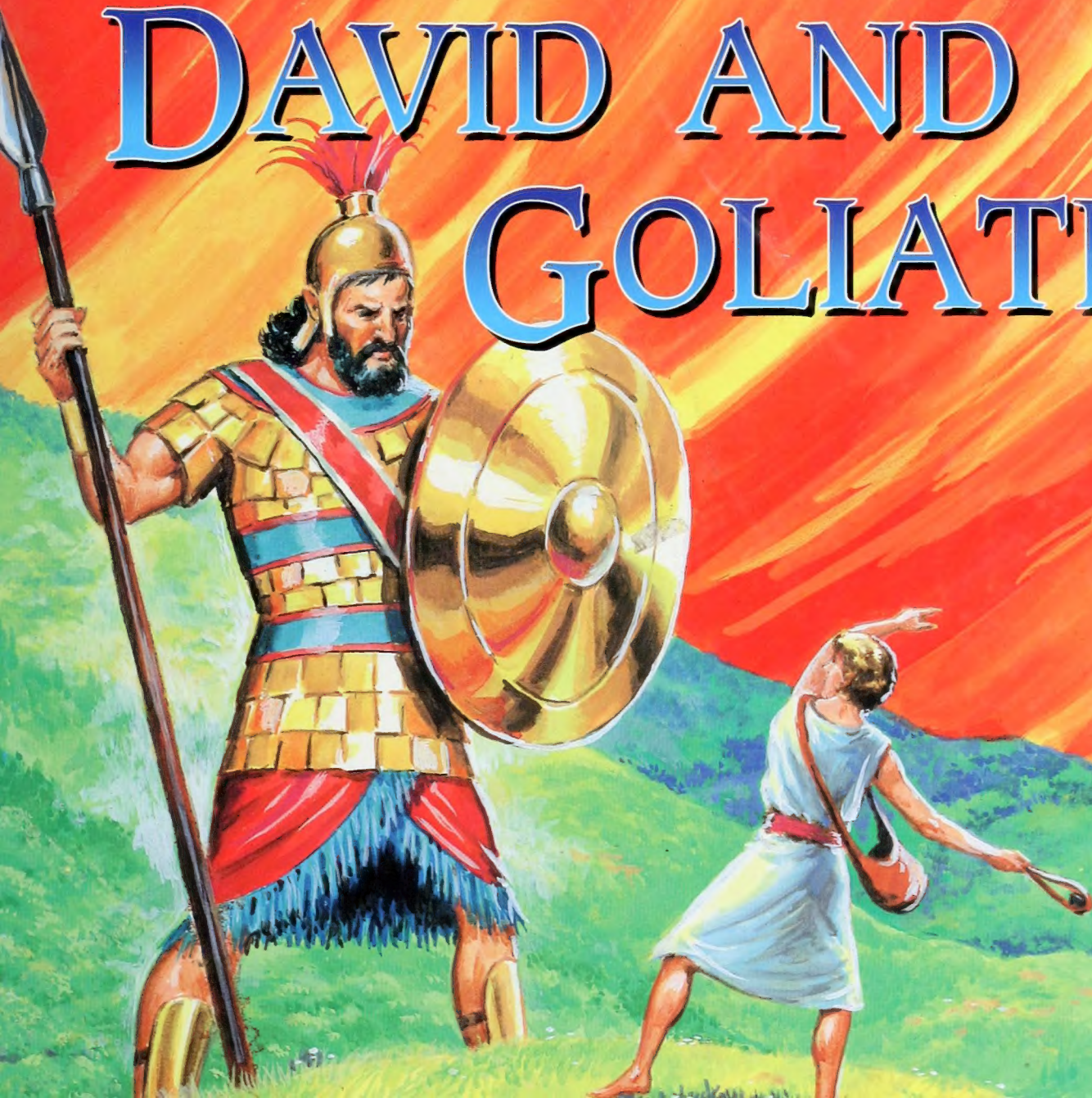


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Adapted by Maxine Nodel

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In the valley of Elah, two great armies faced each other, that of the Philistines and that of the Israelites, led by King Saul.



For many years and through many battles, each side stood, neither able to claim the great victory that would end the conflict.



The Philistines were idol-worshippers and bowed to many gods, but the Israelites prayed only to their Lord, whom they knew was the one true God.





The Israelites wanted the Philistines out of their land so that they could worship God in their own way.

One day, there was a great stirring in the Philistine camp.

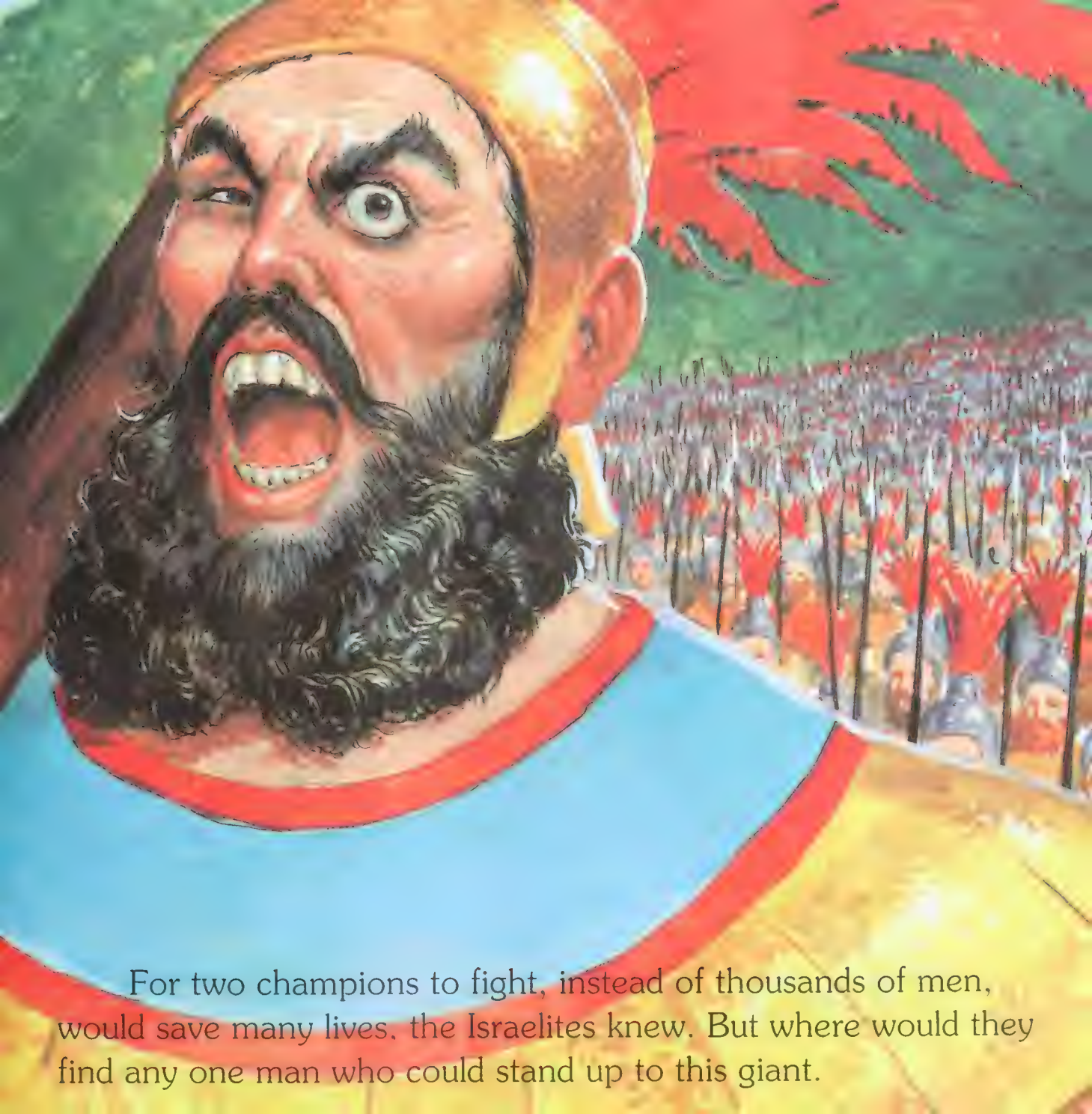




The Israelites watched in amazement. A giant warrior, ten feet tall, clad in bronze armor and carrying an enormous spear, broke from the Philistine ranks and strode towards the Israelites.

“I am Goliath!” he thundered across the valley. “Let one of you come and fight me, if he dares. Then this war will be decided by single combat.”





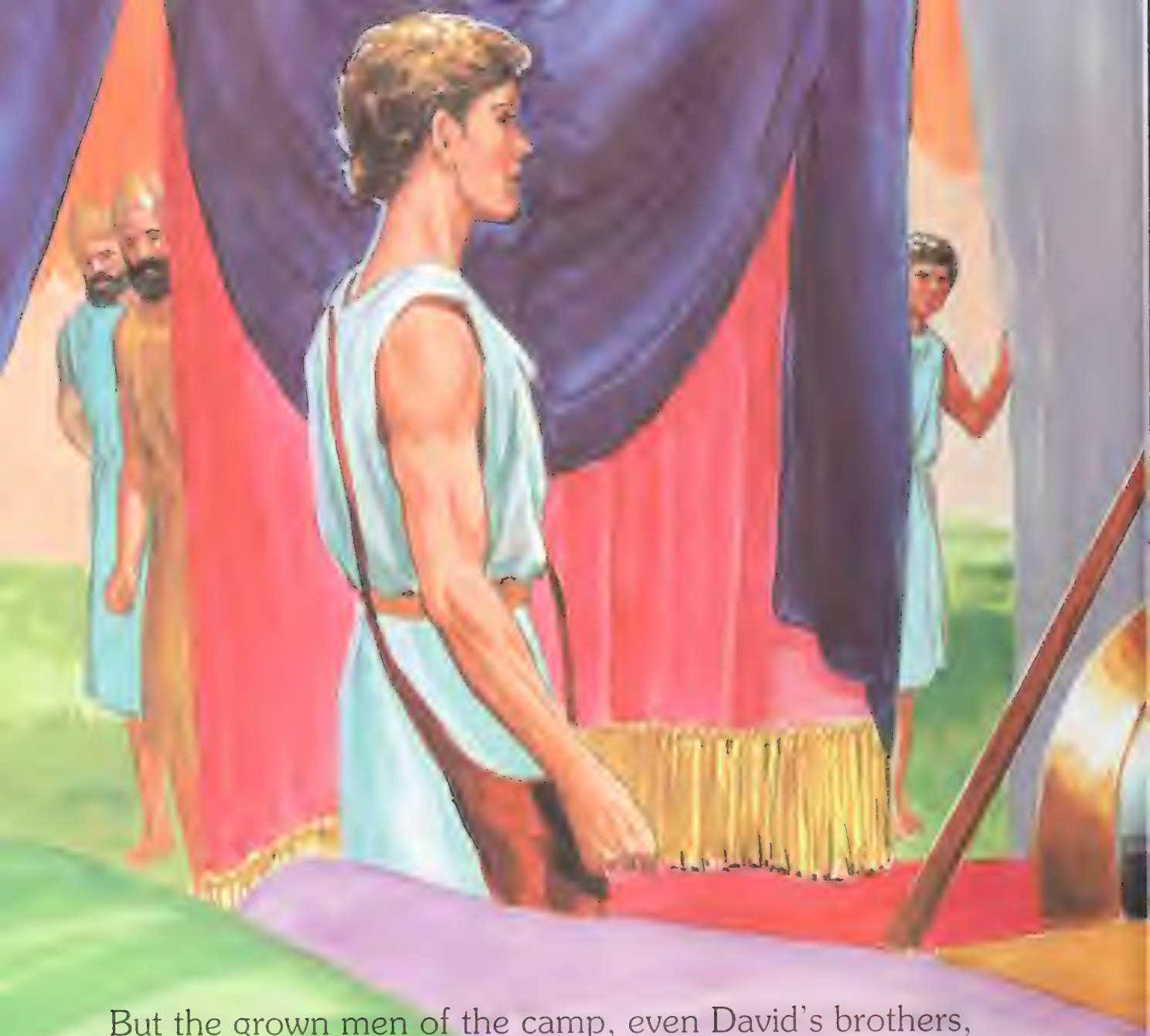
For two champions to fight, instead of thousands of men, would save many lives, the Israelites knew. But where would they find any one man who could stand up to this giant.



In the Israelite army there were three brothers. Their aged father, Jesse, sent their youngest brother, David, to bring them food. Young David was in camp one morning when Goliath issued his challenge.



“Who is this Philistine who dares defy the army of God?” the boy David asked. “I will fight him.”



But the grown men of the camp, even David's brothers, scoffed at him. But David persisted, until his words reached King Saul himself.



“You are only a boy,” said the King. “We cannot let a boy go against a giant.”

But David insisted, "When I watch over my father's sheep, I rescue the lambs from any wild beast that carries them off. I know that God will give me the strength to defeat this Philistine too."

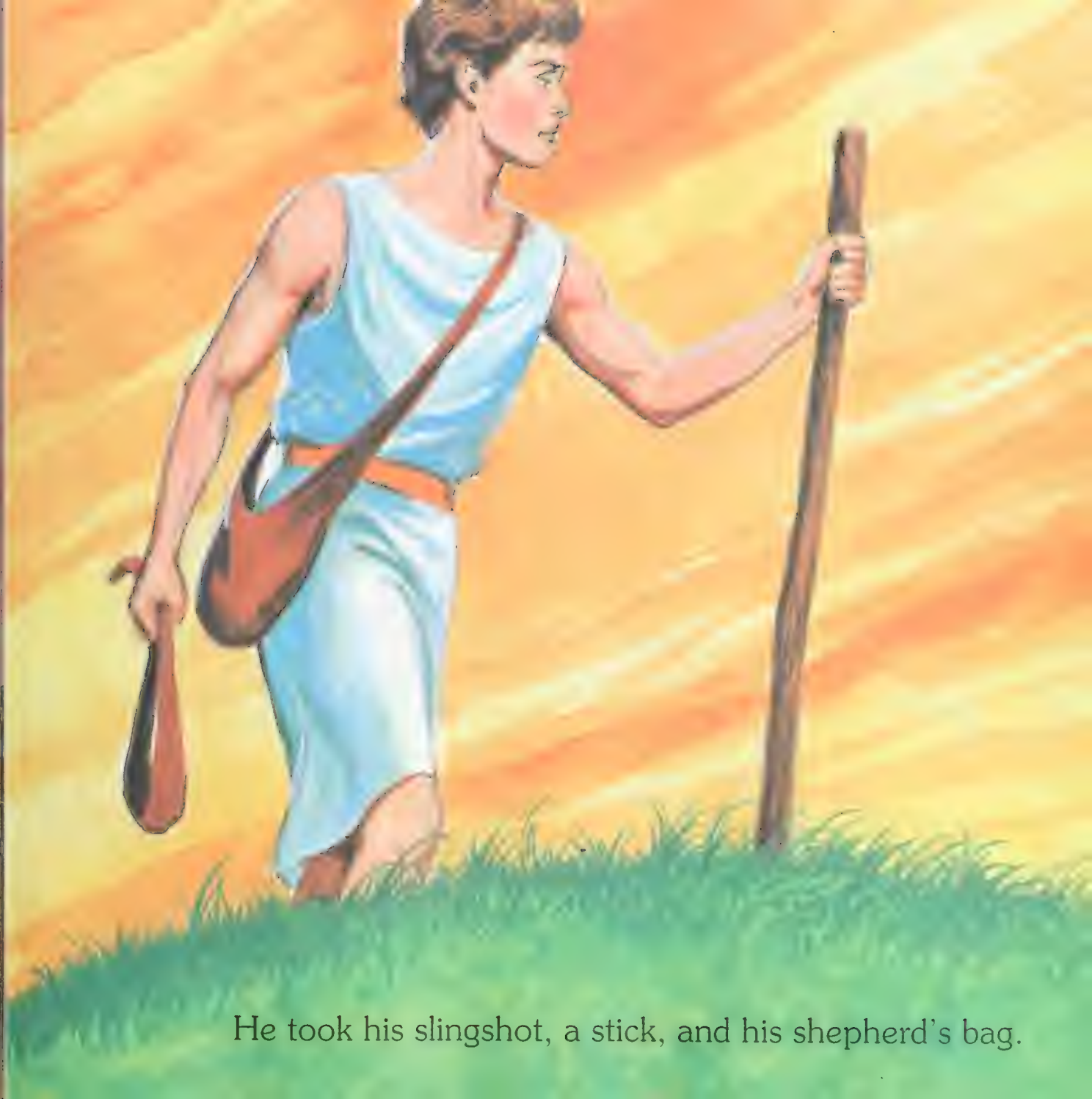




At last, the King gave in. He offered David his own armor and weapons to use against Goliath.

But the boy found the King's armor too large and heavy. "I will fight with my own weapons in my own way," he declared.





He took his slingshot, a stick, and his shepherd's bag.

As David approached the valley, he stopped at a dried-out riverbed. Stooping down, he picked up five smooth stones and put them in his bag.



Then he went forth to face Goliath.





The giant shook with laughter when he saw David.
“Is Israel so short of men they send a boy to fight me?”
Goliath mocked.

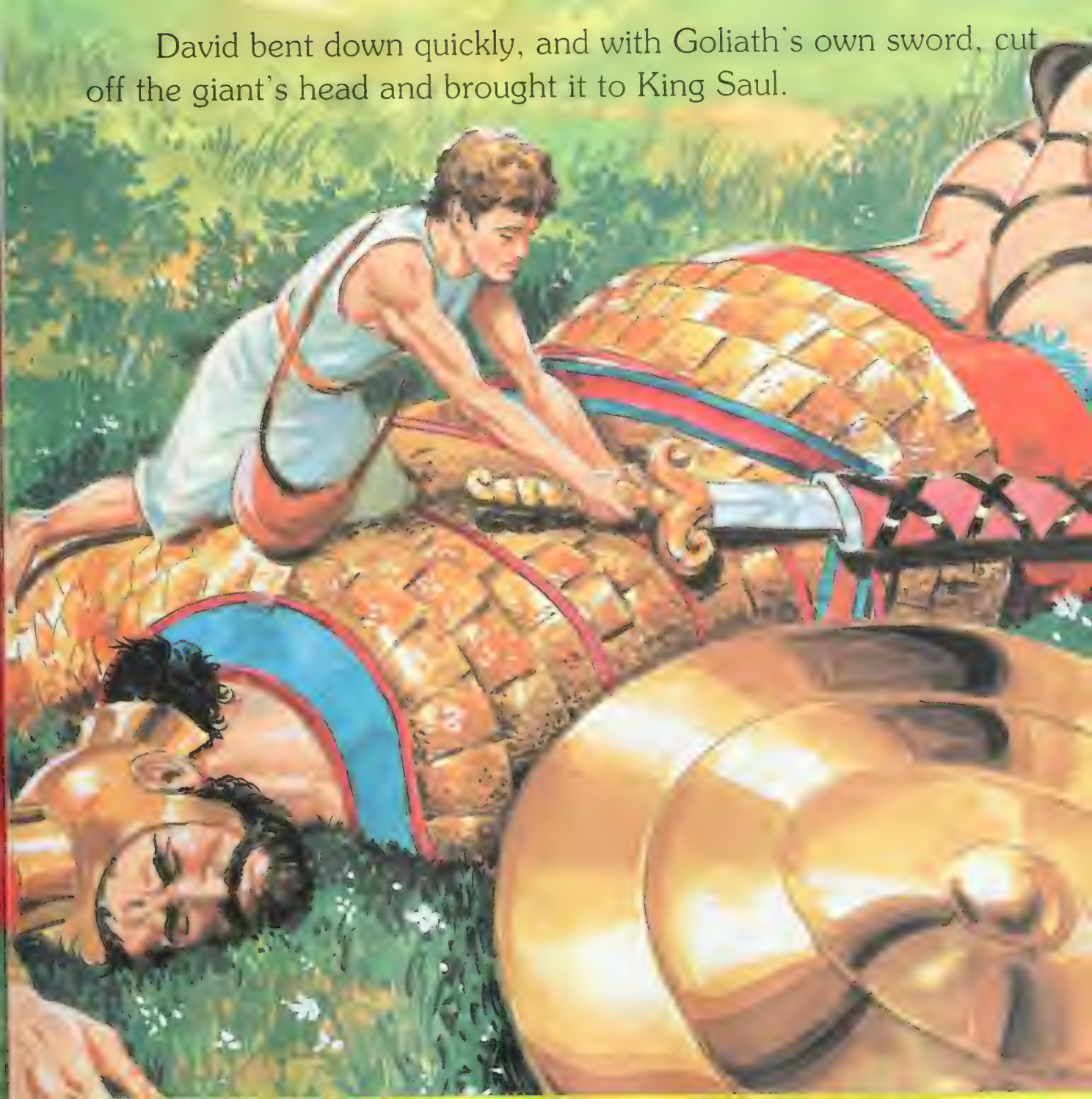


He walked toward David, still mocking and insulting him, as he prepared to kill the boy.

David reached into his bag. He drew out one of his stones. As Goliath got closer David raised his slingshot. The stone hit Goliath in the forehead, and the giant tumbled forward on the ground.



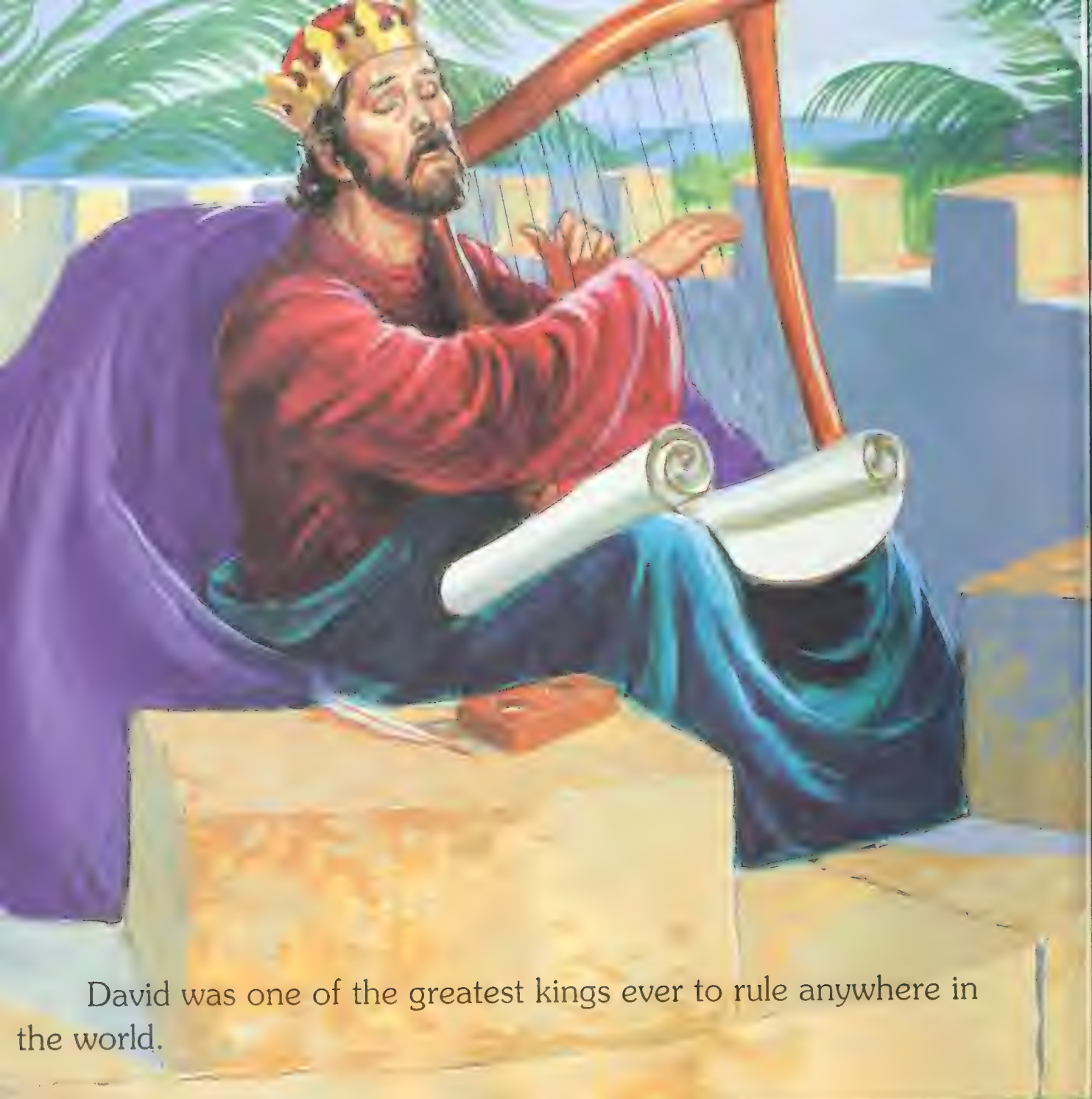
David bent down quickly, and with Goliath's own sword, cut off the giant's head and brought it to King Saul.



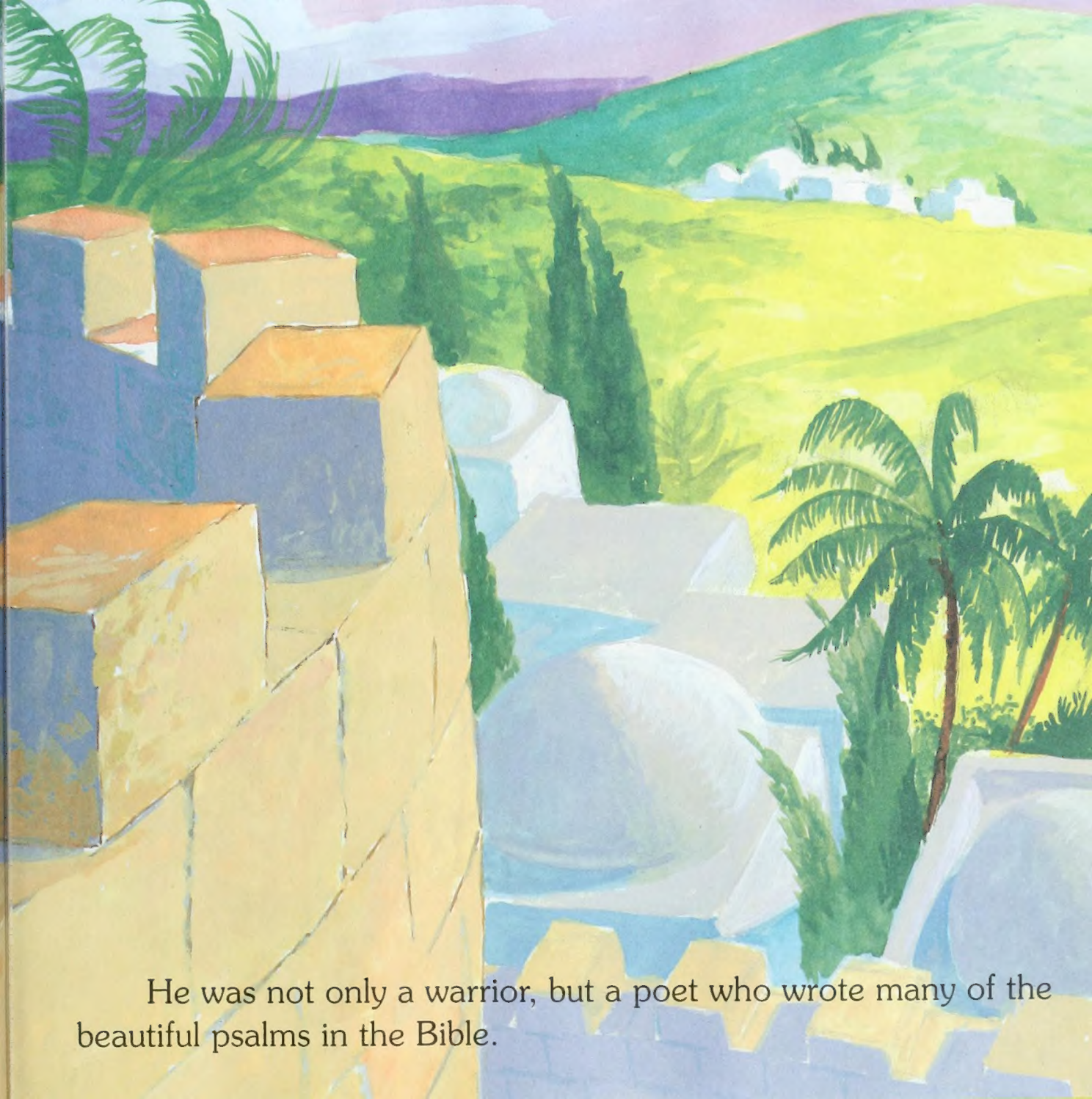


The people loved David, and Saul grew jealous of David's popularity. David loved Saul, even though they eventually fought and became enemies. But David was God's chosen, and became king of Israel.





David was one of the greatest kings ever to rule anywhere in the world.



He was not only a warrior, but a poet who wrote many of the beautiful psalms in the Bible.



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